The Engliſh Guzman:

OR,

Captain Hiltons Memoirs,

The Grand Informer.

READER,

IT will not fall to every mans ſhare to fly over the preſent and Future Ages on the wings of Fame. But this is certain, whoever is toucht with a Spice of Ambition, muſt eternize his memory by ſomething ſingular and extraordinary. If therefore he will not go to the coſt and charges of enrolling his Name in the Records of Hiſtory by great and glorious Atchievments, he muſt attempt it by ſome ſignal and tranſcendent Villanies, or elſe be content to lie as obſcure in his Tomb as he did in the Womb, and ſo be of as little notice after he is dead, as he was before he had a Being: Now ſince there is a natural deſire in all men after immortality, and to out-live their Individual ſelves, and that very few will endeavour, or can hope upon endeavour to enter their Names in the Regiſter by vertuous and generous exploits, the greater part are reſolved to be famous for Infamy, (as much the cheaper way,) and at any Rates to purchaſe a ſurviving glory: His Name that burnt *Dina*'s Temple ſtill lives, when his that built it is buried in the Grave of Oblivion; And Biſhop *Bonner* had ſneakt away ingloriouſly into the other World, had not the Blood of the Martyrs given him a Red Letter in the Calender: And he that burnt *London* is like to flouriſh to after times, when the firſt Founder is long ſince forgotten: So deſirable it ſeems to this ſort of men to be in the Mouth of Fame, though ſhe has a ſtinking Breath.

Amongſt this kind of the Ambitious, I may reckon our preſent Informers, who (as *Belzebub* accounts Empire worth his ſeeking, though in Hell) conceive it honourable to purchaſe Glory, though by the moſt profligate, and abominable actions.

This Tribe of Vermine has ever among all Civiliz'd Nations been reputed a Peſtilent Generation, the Plague of the Common-Wealth; and ſo Sir *Edw. Coke* our great Oracle of the Law has ſtigmatiz'd them; *Turbidem Hominum genus*, a ſort of Raſcals that never hope to catch Fiſh but in Troubled Waters; And he adds; That they *are viperous Vermine who under the Mantle of Law and Juſtice, inſtituted for the Protection of the Innocent and the good of the Common-wealth, did vex, and Depauperire the Subject, and commonly the poorer ſort, for malice and private ends, and never for the love of Juſtice.*

In the number of thoſe innumerable Pretenders to thrive by this Trade, there are onely two or three of their Cape Merchants, that can expect to be enrolled at preſent, the reſt muſt be content to wait the leaſure of my Pen, which if it could do any thing ſhould render them Immortal.

John and *George Hilton*, two Brothers, (the *Simeon* and *Levi* of this Age) are the firſt who by infinite merits may challenge their Precedency in the Catalogue, a Brace of Undertakers who to the diſhonour of an Ancient Family in *Weſtmoreland*, pretend from thence to deirve their Original: But let this be be ſpoken under the Roſe, leſt that Family upon this notice diſclaim the Relation, or bring their Action againſt them for ſo horrid a Slander.

'Tis now about 12 years ago ſince this *John Hilton* was called a Soldier, and where he was not known, paſt by the Title of Captain; a Civility which we commonly afford to all of a Military Character: who Quartering at one Mr. *John Bennins*, who then kept the *Bull-Inn* in the *Strand Weſtminſter*, inveigled the Gentlemans onely Daughter, not much above twelve years of Age, and without the conſent, and againſt the will, and to the exceeding great affliction of her Father, Married her: This was the early Eſſay of his Excellency, and a hopeful promiſe what he might arrive to upon further emprovement; Having rob'd the Father of his Child, his next attempt was to cheat him of his Eſtate; In order to which, he pretends that he had an Eſtate of Inheritance of the clear yearly value of One Hundred Pounds in *Weſtmoreland*; and produces ſome old Deeds, and brings truſty Vouchers too, (which a Perſon of his Credit and Intereſt could never want)

to

to confirm his Proteſtation: This Eſtate he vows to ſettle in jointure upon his young Lady, which no doubt brought her to Bed before her time, & in the mean time drew from the honeſt eaſy Father a conſiderable Portion to anſwer ſuch a Dowry, though the truth is, all his Land lay in *Utopia*: But that we may not load the Memory of poor Mr. *Bennings* too heavily, the Reader muſt underſtand, that *John Hilton* in this Feat of Activity, perſonated a Gentleman of that Name in that County, who had really ſuch an Eſtate, though our *Hilton* was nothing a Kin to it, which may a little Atone the guilt of his haſty Credulity.

But Mr. *Hilton* it ſeems had occaſion for a ſmall Sum of Two thouſand Pounds, or ſuch a triſle, to maintain his grandeur, and equipage, for which Monies he uſes this ingenious expedient. He Forges a Warrant of Attorney for a Judgment in His Majeſties Court of Common-Pleas againſt his Father in Law, for Two Thouſand Pounds at his own Suit; and procures one *William Johnſon* to Perſonate his innocent Father in their tranſacting it: For which piece of good ſervice, he promiſes *Johnſon* a Lieutenants Place in *France*, and fifty Pounds in money, to equip him for the employment. *Johnſon* Seals, and delivers the Warrant of Attorney, in Mr. *Bennings* Name, to his dear Son *John Hilton*; By vertue of which Warrant, the Judgment was entered in the Court of Common-Pleas, in *Michelmas* Term, 1674 and Execution was to be taken out in due time. This Forgery taking Air, and coming to the ears of Mr. *Benning*, he began to buſle, and with ſome trouble and charge, obtains a ſtay of Execution, and upon Examination of the matter in the ſaid Court in *Eaſter* Term, 1675. the ſaid Warrant for the Judgment of 2000 *l.* was diſcovered to be a meer Forgery, and honeſt *John* was Committed to the Fleet, and an Indictment or Information ordered to be exhibited againſt him in the Kings Bench for the Forgery, which Rule of the Court ſpeaks thus in Engliſh.

Wyrley. Eaſter-Term in the 27th year of King *Charles* the Second.

Hilton againſt Benning. } ſſ.

THe 27th of April, *Upon the ſeveral Oaths of the Defendent*, William Johnſon *and* Richard Mallibar, *and upon hearing of the Plaintiff, and Councel on both ſides, and upon View of the Warrant of Attorney pretended to be ſealed by the Defendant for the Confeſſing of a Judgment of Two Thouſand Pounds at the Suit of the Plaintiff, it appears to the Court here, that the ſaid Warrant of Attorney was Forged: It is Ordered by the Court, That the Plaintiff be committed to the Priſon of the* Fleet, *to remain until the Court ſhall otherwiſe Order; and that the Defendant and the ſaid* William Johnſon *ſhall enter into a Recognizance with Condition that they and the ſaid* Richard Mallibar *ſhould without delay cauſe an Indictment or Information to be exhibited againſt the ſaid Plaintiff, for Forging the ſaid Warrant of Attorney: And that further proceedings upon the ſaid Judgment be ſtayed.*

Upon the Motion of Mr. Sergeant *Baldwyn* and others, for the Defendant.

Honeſt *John Hilton*, in purſuance of this Rule of the Court, is now got into *Limbo*, and an Information exhibited againſt him in the *Crown Office*; and ſeeing all his Tricks and ſhifts failed him, he pretends great Repentance, makes moſt humble ſubmiſſion, diſcharges the Judgment, and upon ſubſcribing the following Recantation, was diſcharg'd: *Whereas there was a Warrant of Attorney pretended to be ſeal'd and deliver'd by* John Benning *of the Pariſh of St.* Martin *in the Fields in the County of* Middleſex, *Gent. Dated the 20th day of* May 1674. *for the Confeſſing of a Judgment of* 2000 l. *Debt, and Coſts of Suit, in His Majeſties Court of* Common Pleas, *by him the ſaid* John Benning *to me* John Hilton *Gent. and the ſame Judgment was entred on Record as of* Michaelmas *Term now laſt paſt: Now know all men by theſe preſents, That I the ſaid* John Hilton *do hereby freely and voluntarily confeſs and acknowledge, that the ſaid* John Benning *never ſigned, ſealed, or delivered the ſaid Warrant of Attorney, but that I the ſaid* John Hilton *wrote the Name of the ſaid* John Benning *to the ſaid Warrant of Attorney; and that one* William Johnſon *took the Seal of the ſame, and delivered the ſame as the Act and Deed of the ſame* John Benning. *In witneſs whereof I the ſaid* John Hilton *have hereunto ſet my Hand and Seal.* 1675.

Here, I ſuppoſe, the Reader will be content to pauſe a while, and take a little breath, and for his Entertainment I will propoſe to his conſideration a few modeſt Queries:

Query I. *Whether* John Hilton *Gentleman his Proſecution of Diſſenters be any more then Letters of Marque or Repriſal, for all the Damages ſuſtained by him, when he was ſo cruelly perſecuted for Righteouſneſs-ſake, that is, for Forgery?*

Query II. *Whether he hath not juſt cauſe to hate all* Presbyterians *to the Worlds end, ever ſince he was brought upon the* Stool of Repentance?

Query III. *Whether he has not approv'd himſelf the wiſeſt Tineker in mending the holes in his own broken Fortunes, by making twenty in other mens?*

Query IV.

Query IV. *Whether he be not the fitteſt Inſtrument to Convict Diſſenting Proteſtants, who could convict his Father of Two Thouſand Pounds on ſo ſlender a Foundation?*

Query V. *Whether the Faith of thoſe Worſhipful Gentlemen be not ſtrong enough to remove Mountains, and raiſe the Dead, who could believe the Information or Oath of one ſo Notoriouſly Convicted of Forgery?*

Query VI. *Whether Mr.* John Hilton, *being upon Record in the Court of Common-Pleas for Forgery, hath not taken a certain courſe to Immortalize his Memory as much as* Alexander, *or Ceſar, by all their victories? And whether he be not ſomething beholden to this Paper to blazon his venial vertues?*

Query VII. *Whether ſuch an Inſtrument of Reformation be not enough to diſparage the beſt cauſe for which he engages, and to credit the worſt againſt which he appears?*

Query VIII. *Laſtly, Whether it be not very ſuſpicious at leaſt that the Diſſenters may be honeſt men, who are honoured with the malice of ſuch a Proſecutor?*

It is now time after this Diverſion to Reaſſume his Hiſtory! The Captain having now regain'd his Liberty, ſpeeds into the North, whether to receive his Rents in *Weſtmoreland*, or to ſet up his Trade where he was not ſo well known, the ſequel will diſcover: It was impoſſible a Head and Heart ſo working as his, ſhould ſit out, and therefore he ventures upon another odd Jobb of Journey work, wherein to ſay truth, he was his Crafts Maſter, though envious Fate does not alwayes Entail ſucceſs upon the moſt glorious Enterprizes: Much had he done to Court that Coy Lady *Fame*, but yet to all his Heroick Actions one more muſt be added to ripen him for Immortality. There was one Mr. *Francis Blinkenſop* who had Morgaged an Eſtate in *Cumberland* to one Mr. *Bird*, who upon Non-payment of the Moneys had obtain'd Poſſeſſion by due Courſe of Law: Now help Mr. *John Hilton*! now or never help! And thus his Politick Pate contriv'd the Buſineſs: He ſets up *Thomas Blinkenſop* the Elder, Father of the ſaid *Francis*, as Tenant in Poſſeſſion to the Premiſes, and names *Thomas Blinkenſop* the younger to let the Eſtate to the Father, (though indeed neither of them had the leaſt colour of pretence to the Eſtate, nor ever were in Poſſeſſion of it) and hereby a Warrant of Attorney is made to eject Mr. *Bird*, and a Judgment entered by *Hiltons* Procurement in the Common-Pleas, in *Eaſter* Term, 1677. Upon which a Writ of Poſſeſſion is directed to the Sheriff to diſpoſſeſs Mr. *Bird*. But ſee the miſchief on't! Mr. *Bird* was too old to be catcht with Chaff, he procures an Examination of the whole buſineſs, whereupon the Judgment was ſet aſide, and honeſt *John*, once more defeated of his vaſt hopes and expectations. And now let the Reader reſolve me theſe few Queſtions.

Query I. *Whether he that cheats me once do not prove himſelf a Knave, but if he cheats me twice in the ſame way, he does not prove me a Fool?*

Query II. *Whether we ought more to admire the Littleneſs of Mr.* Hiltons *Conſcience, or the Greatneſs of his Impudence, that in the ſame Court, in the compaſs of ſo few years, durſt drive the ſame trade of contriving Letters of Attorney?*

Query III. *Whether the ill ſucceſs of theſe baffled Attempts might not reaſonably have diſcouraged his daring Spirit in Proſecuting Sir* Robert Clayton, *before the then Lord Chief Juſtice of the Common-Pleas, who probably would remember his late Forgeries entred upon Record in that Court?*

Hitherto we have given ſome ſhort account of the ſerious and Religious part of Mr. *Hiltons* Life, as he ſtands ſingle by himſelf. A touch for a cloſe of the more Ludicrous Scenes of his Converſation may do well, for now he hunts in Couples, with his younger Brother Mr. *George: Par Nobile Fratrum.*

Their Trepanning of young Cullies is too low a game for ſuch high Flyers, to be here recorded, tis more agreeable to tell a ſtory of their Attempts upon the weaker Sex, where (if ever) thoſe blades will approve themſelves Right valiant.

There was a young Lady of Conſiderable Fortunes, and more then ordinary beauty, upon this perſon, the brothers had a Deſign, whether they intended to hold her as Tenants in Common, or that ſhe was to be partner with Mr. *John's Lady*, Information has not yet given me Satisfaction, but upon the Queſtion it was reſolv'd to attack her, and now the two brothers are in cloſe conſult how to manage the affair. They wiſely conſidered, that all Inſtruments are to be uſed according to their Reſpective aptneſs for Service, and therefore being men that were conſcious of and privy to their own Perſo-

nal

ral Excellencies. *George* the younger brother was the sprucer Gallant, and carried the fairer garb, but *John* the elder the more accomplisht Courtier, and more insinuating Complementer, and so it was agreed, that *John* should be equipt in his brother *Georges* Trappings, and thus harnassed they undertake their adventure, But here the Devil who had long born them a secret grudge, for miscarrying in some of his former services, left them to their meer Mother wit, which failing them at a dead lift, *John* is taken Prisoner, and provided of a lodging for some weeks in the *Poultrey* Counter.

From forging of Writings, they proceed to Coyning of Money, a project much like that of the Philosophers Stone, which promises Mountains of Gold, but performs very little, as now happened to this unfortunate Couple: They thought it dangerous to meddle with the Kings Coyn, they knew it would not be a Pillory but a Gallows that would be the reward of that boldness, and therefore they provide a Stamp to Goin *Dutch Stivers*; Men must play at small Games that have not Broad Pieces and Guinies to stake; But their Progress in this Mystick Art I refer for another occasion.

Broke of all Trades they set up for Informers, and yet would make the World believe that they wear a more noble Character: *John Hilton* boasted to a Gentleman at *Grays-Inn* the last Term in *Westminster-Hall*, that his Majesty allowed him 50 Servants, to manage the design, and he was indebted to him 600*l.* What must Dissenters expect from him who blushes not to reproach his Sacred Majesty? And yet that Courant which flutters up and down the Town every week, has the audacionsness to intitle it self *to His Majesties Special Command:* Nay, to that height of Impudence is he arrived, that in a Letter to his Mother, he informs her that he was now fallen upon a very happy employment, that the King owed him twelve hundred Pounds, and that he doubted not but in his next, she should receive the glad news that he was *Knighted:* Vous Avez *Sir John Hilton?*

How they brought their Actions against several Aldermen of the City of *London*, for thousands of pounds, how they promis'd themselves Coach and Horse, Lacqueys and Foot-boys, in Gorgeous Liveries, with the event of that tryal, and the failing of their swelling hopes: Their way of Information by the spirit of Prophecy, of Conventicles to be held two or three days before they were kept, nay when they were never kept, nor designed to be kept; their breaking open houses to search for Conventicles when they knew there were none, and then producing a dormant Warant to seize Goods and Persons: Their accomplices of both Sexes; especially Squire *Shad*, *Robert Duck*, &c. with their exploits, Knight *Erantry*, and famous Adventures, with the Characters of the Inferiour Informers, as to their Religion, and Honesty, will require a second sheet of Paper.

London, *Printed for* R. Ofwel. 1683.